Title: Need to review the working of Community Information Centres (CICs) and ensure their continuation with central support in the Eleventh Plan.

DR. ARUN KUMAR SARMA (LAKHIMPUR): The special scheme for setting up of Community Information Centres (CIC) in every block launched in 2002 by the Ministry of Communication & IT under PM's special initiative for the NER was a laudable approach. Under the scheme 487 blocks of NER were covered, which are rendering efficient service in the rural areas in the field of computer literacy, awareness and for providing basic service to the communities mostly belonging to BPL families. It was stipulated that these CICs would become commercially viable and would function as independent entity without Govt. support beyond March 2007. However, the ground reality reveals that none of these CICs become self-sustainable due to irregular power supply, inadequacy of technical support, V-Sat maintenance, computer peripherals and due to inadequate exposure and poor condition of the beneficiaries in rural areas.

On the other hand, the State governments are unable to support these CICs due to their resource constraints. It is learnt that without getting any communication from the Central Govt. some of the District authorities have already closed down the CICs and ordered for handing over of assets. As a consequence more than 1000 youngsters who got engaged in these CICs and exposed to the IT sector will now become unemployed with the vulnerability of being exploited by the militant outfits.

I, therefore, urge upon the Govt. specially PMO, Planning Commission and IT Ministry to review the entire matter on proper perspective and to ensure continuation of CICs with Central support in the Eleventh Plan. (ends)

...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. Members, I cannot hear anything. Please go back to your seats. I will give you time to speak. If you all come to the well then I cannot hear what you are saying. Please go back to your seats. ...(*Interruptions*)[R1]